

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 985 and 986, had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on both.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2010

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 976, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 64) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 976, the joint resolution is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 64

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2010 (division B of Public Law 111-68) is further amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting "December 23, 2009".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, before I start, I don't see either one of them on the House floor now, but I just want to take this time to note that today is the birthday of the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the ranking member of the Defense appropriations subcommittee, and also of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), who is the second ranking Democrat on the same subcommittee. So in their absence, I think we wanted to wish them well.

With that, Madam Speaker, I would simply say this is a simple joint resolution, a continuing resolution, which takes the Congress to December 23, next Wednesday. It is made necessary by the fact that it is just possible that the Senate might not finish its work before the 18th. They have been known for their speed, but this may be an exception. It is also useful in order to give the President additional time to review the Defense bill before he signs it.

With that, I would urge support, and I am prepared to yield back after the gentleman has made his remarks.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, this is a simple 5-day CR, and I happily yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I would again urge support for the resolution, and I would yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 976, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMITTING CONTINUED FINANCING OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 976, I call up the bill (H.R. 4314) to permit continued financing of Government operations, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 976, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4314

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONTINUED FINANCING OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS.

Subsection (b) of section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking the dollar amount contained therein and inserting "\$12,394,000,000,000".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. STARK) and the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

□ 1415

Mr. STARK. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. STARK asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STARK. This bill is necessary to allow the government to keep operating past the new year so that we can adjourn for the year. The Treasury Department has told us we will reach our current limit on the national debt on December 31—Happy New Year. Unlike past years, the Treasury Department has informed us they don't have the ability to maneuver and buy more time, so the United States would begin to default on its debt if we do not act.

The bill would raise the debt limit by \$290 billion, enough to last through February 11. Unfortunately, we will have to revisit this issue early next year. I wish we could have avoided that, but to do so, we would have had to resolve differences with the Senate over a budget commission and a statutory PAYGO. With the Senate preoccupied on other matters, that would be impossible before the holidays. Even if the Senate were to pass the larger debt limit increase we sent over to them, we would still have to act again next year.

It's important that we do this, as I said, to keep the government running. I don't like to raise the debt limit, but I do like being in the majority, and I do like seeing us pay our bills because we have an international obligation to many of our creditors.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Madam Speaker, here we go again. Christmas is a week away and Congress is scrambling at the last minute just so we can go home. While Americans are doing last-minute holiday shopping, the majority party is doing its last-minute spending. This year, many families are cutting back on their holiday shopping. The average holiday spending by Americans this year has dropped to \$343 per person from \$372 a year ago. You would think that during these tough times when most Americans are forced to tighten their belts, Congress would do the same. No chance under this majority.

This majority stumbled into 2009 with a budget that raised the deficit by \$1.8 trillion. Then Congress decided to pass an \$800 billion stimulus bill, \$3 billion on Cash for Clunkers, \$1.3 trillion on the Democratic health care bill, a trillion dollars on cap-and-trade and, recently, another \$447 billion was spent on Washington, D.C., bureaucrats. After all this spending, the national debt is now \$12 trillion. Every American citizen will now owe more than \$39,000 to pay for Washington's spending.

Now Democrats want to raise the debt limit to allow even more spending in 2010. The real fat cat is the Federal Government which spends, spends, spends while the American public gets stuck with the bill.

I urge my colleagues to reject raising the debt limit. Give the gift that America deserves: a responsible Federal budget.

Merry Christmas to everyone.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished committee member of Ways and Means, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, be allowed to control the time for our side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the debt limit legislation we are considering today, and I want to thank Mr. RANGEL for his hard work on the bill in the waning days of the Congress this first session.

Let me talk about what the bill does. This bill is simply about continuing operations for the Federal Government. That is the title of the legislation. "Continuing operations" means getting the Social Security checks out on time, an almost sacred duty that we have. This means providing support for our troops and keeping our museums and our parks open. That is what an increase in the debt limit will allow. Simply stated, this is about bills that have already been incurred.

Now, I will, during my time here, resist the temptation to become overly

partisan and speak specifically to the issue that is in front of us until there is a misstatement of the facts in opposition.

What this bill does not do is increase or decrease spending. That is a key consideration. Those decisions have already been made through the regular order. Let me emphasize the following: This bill does not raise nor does it cut taxes. That is different legislation. I respect the opinion of all Members here—who, by the way, my hunch is have been on all sides of this issue during their time here in the Congress. But we all desire the same, and that is to bring our budget into balance with the future. Beyond that, there is broad agreement. But this bill is simply paying the check after the items have already been ordered. This bill would raise the limit by \$290 billion, which is estimated to allow the government to operate through February 11 and allow us to adjourn for the year.

Despite what some might say, the Treasury Department will reach the current limit on the national debt by December 31, and they have told us that there is no ability to do extraordinary measures that will, indeed, stretch that out.

Now, I hope that the offering that I make to resist demagoguery on this issue will be met. If not, we certainly will have an opportunity during the course of the next hour to slug it out based upon the facts, and I hope that we will regard Social Security and veterans bills that have already been incurred to be paid. We certainly can have moments of instructions here—we're all indeed prepared for that on all sides—but I hope that the opportunity to resist the temptation to dismiss the reality of what we're doing here will be before all of us.

I reserve my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER).

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, President Obama and congressional Democrats have maxed out the national credit card with reckless spending, and they're back for more.

The American people are tired of overspending and tired of policies that have done nothing to lift us out of this economic downturn. Democrats rammed through a so-called stimulus that left us asking: Where are the jobs? Now congressional Democrats are asking for more money that they will turn around later this afternoon and spend on another stimulus bill that spends even more on failed policies.

Madam Speaker, it's time for Congress to say "no" to endless debt that is an albatross around the neck of our Nation's economy and future generations. Vote "no" on this increased debt limit.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to a voice of fiscal responsibility here in the House, to Mr. BOYD, the gentleman from Florida, for 2 minutes.

Mr. BOYD. I thank my friend, Mr. NEAL, for yielding.

I think all of us here today—certainly in this game of inside baseball—understand that we have to raise the debt limit. We don't have a choice to let our Nation go into default on its bonds.

But I do come today to ask you to support it. I come reluctantly. And I am glad to hear that my friends on both sides of the aisle now are for fiscal responsibility.

I think many of us over here have been saying for years—particularly for the last 8, 9 years—that policies that we were pursuing starting in 2001 of spending more than we were taking in on an annual basis had to stop. We found ourselves in pretty good shape in 2001, and then we changed the policies, and you know the rest of the story, the history of that.

Many of us have been working all during that 8-year period to try to re-install the tools that we could use to return fiscal discipline to our government: the tools such as pay-as-you-go rules, something that we had in place in the 1990s that was allowed to expire by the Congress and the administration in 2002; discretionary spending limit.

There are lots of tools that can be used, but in the last 9 years, this Congress and the administrations have rejected those tools, and it's time for us to put those back into place.

We don't have the will here at the United States Congress to discipline ourselves. I think both parties have proven that over the years. So we have to come back with those tools such as pay-as-you-go, discretionary spending caps, sequestration, whatever it takes. There's a good idea floating around on both sides of the Capitol here. It's called the SAFE Commission.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. BOYD. So what we're trying to do here is hit the pause button for less than 60 days, and we will move forward, break for the Christmas holiday, and then come back, and we have to focus on this issue of fiscal responsibility.

I have said to my party leaders, as I have said to the other party leaders over the last 8 years, we have to look beyond the ends of our nose and we have to focus on fiscal responsibility. And the first step we have to do is keep our country from going into default on its bonds. And then we have to move forward to reinstall such tools as PAYGO, commissions, whatever it takes to get us focused on getting our government back to the point of acting in a responsible way for fiscal matters.

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the Republican Conference Chair, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4314. It is a bill that will increase the statutory limit on the national debt by \$290 billion.

Now, my distinguished colleague and friend just called that "hitting the pause button," and that was evidence of his characteristic candor, because as everybody in this body knows, this \$290 billion increase in the statutory limit on the national debt is simply a down payment on the nearly \$2 trillion increase in the national debt that this Democratic majority intends to move in this Congress after the first of the year.

Increasing the national debt. You know, it's moments like this that I have really got to say that the American people have had it. I mean, at a time of economic difficulty for working families, small businesses, and family farmers all across this country, a time when families are sitting down at kitchen tables, huddled around aluminum desks in small businesses, in basements with fluorescent lights hanging, they're figuring out where to cut back. They're figuring out what expenses to put off. They're just figuring out how to make it from one month to the next.

And those families and those small businesses don't have the ability to walk down to the bank and just increase their debt limit with the wave of the hand. I mean, they have got to make hard choices. And to their undying credit, the American people are making those hard choices. And the reason they're so frustrated looking at Washington, D.C., today is because they see a national government that is completely out of step with the character and the values and the sacrifice that the American people are practicing every day—not that it's anything new.

As the distinguished chairman just said a few moments ago, when Republicans were in control, we did our share of spending and overspending. Republicans doubled the national debt in the 8 years of the last administration. But this Democratic majority just passed a budget that will double the national debt in the next 5 years and triple it in 10.

□ 1430

After 3 years of Democratic control in the House, the national debt has increased by 39 percent. The national deficit hit a record of \$1.4 trillion. In this fiscal year, it's expected to reach a new record of \$1.8 trillion. Millions of Americans are asking, Madam Speaker, when will it stop? When will Washington get the message that we can't borrow, spend and bail our way back to a growing America, that we've got to begin, Republicans and Democrats, to practice what we so love to preach when we are home: fiscal discipline, fiscal responsibility? And then we come here right before the Christmas break

on the day we are probably headed out of this building, and we're going to pass a \$290 billion increase in the statutory limit on the national debt.

The American people don't want more debt for Christmas. This Congress ought to be sticking around, making the hard choices, reducing the size and scope of government and reforming these entitlements. Do the work the way the American people are doing the work, so help us, God.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, before I come to my friend's comments, I want to yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, I spoke with Chairman RANGEL earlier, and it is our intention, as we did this month in passing the Tax Extenders Act of 2009, to make sure that those provisions hold. That bill contains a 1-year extension of dozens of important expiring provisions, including the popular R&D credit, the sales tax deduction and the college tuition deduction, among many others.

We are now hearing the Senate may not take up this provision, or provisions, and pass the bill before they expire on December 31. It is our intention to insist upon the House position and to work to ensure that our bill providing a seamless extension of these tax benefits will be enacted as soon as possible in the new year.

These provisions are crucial for both American business and individual taxpayers, and I am pleased that we were able to get the House to pass this bill before the year concluded, but it is disappointing that the other body will not be able to take it up this year. It is our goal, however, to ensure that this bill will provide a seamless extension when enacted based upon the House measure.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Mr. PENCE because I thought that the tone of what he offered was entirely reasonable because he didn't pass out partisan blame in the instance that brings us here at this time. But a gentle reminder, I don't know how you could have voted for the war in Iraq and not vote now to pay the bill, because that's part of what we are being asked to do today. I understand how difficult this is, why it causes heartburn. But having said that, how can you say that you were willing to commit 160,000 soldiers to Iraq, and when the bill comes due, not pay it? That essentially is the argument that is in front of us today.

And I understand the arguments about those American families who are having a difficult time as we proceed to this holiday season, and we want to be as helpful to them as we can. And as they gather around the kitchen table to talk about the problems they have, we understand that we want to provide as much support for them as we can. But let's not forget the Social Security recipients who are currently sitting around the table as they watch this debate, wondering if their checks are going to be mailed to them on time at the first of the year.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the ranking member of Ways and Means, the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. CAMP.

Mr. CAMP. I thank the gentleman from Nevada for yielding, and also I want to thank him for his leadership on the Ways and Means Committee this year.

The bill before us is a candid admission by the majority that their tax, borrow, and spend ways have driven America deeper and deeper into debt. In fact, because of the failed trillion-dollar stimulus spending bill, America's unemployment is higher than predicted and revenues are lower. But that hasn't stopped the majority from continuing to spend, spend, spend.

Just last week, the majority rolled six major spending bills into one omnibus bill that increased, on average, Federal spending by 11 percent. Now, the bill before us asks us to increase the debt limit another \$290 billion. The American people are asking: where are the jobs? But all they have been shown is more deficits and more debt.

Let's be honest with the American people. It really isn't \$290 billion the majority wants to increase the debt limit by. It's more like \$1.8 trillion. In a few short months, we'll be right back here voting on another bill to increase the debt limit, probably by another \$1.5 trillion.

At the end of 2007, the public debt equaled 65 percent of our gross domestic product, or GDP. By the end of 2009, the figure will exceed 83 percent, and according to President Obama's own budget projections, it will exceed 100 percent of gross domestic product by 2011. Think about it: at the rate the majority is spending, the Federal debt in 2011 will exceed the value of all goods and services produced by the economy that year.

This isn't just a Democrat or a Republican problem. It's a huge problem for every single American. It threatens our economic recovery and our future prosperity. So let's remember the words of then-Senator Obama in 2006 who warned of the dangers of raising the debt limit without addressing the underlying cause. Here is what he said: "The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the U.S. Government can't pay its own bills. It is a sign that we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our government's reckless fiscal policies."

"Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means 'that the buck stops here.' Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better."

Americans do indeed deserve better than what they have received this

year. But rather than heed that warning, Appropriations Committee Chairman OBEY recently said: "We don't really have a choice. The bill's already been run up; the credit card has already been used. When you get the bill in the mail, you need to pay it."

The gentleman from Wisconsin was correct: the credit card has been used. But this legislation doesn't pay the bill. It doesn't even make the minimum monthly payment. It simply asks for more credit.

After going on a \$1.4 trillion deficit spending binge and maxing out the taxpayers' credit cards, Democrats are now asking to increase the credit limit. We should not be asking for more credit. We should be developing a plan to control Federal spending so that future generations are not trapped under this mountain of debt.

Until we see a plan to actually address this underlying problem, as then-Senator Obama warned we must, I cannot, in good conscience, vote for this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 4 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) who was my classmate here 21 years ago and is, in my judgment, as thoughtful as any Member of this House on the issues of the national debt.

Mr. TANNER. Thank you, Mr. NEAL.

Madam Speaker, what we are seeing today is the culmination of a decade-long mismanagement of our Nation's finances. In the year 2000, the revenue and expenditure stream coming to Washington were both around 19 percent of gross domestic product. In other words, we were breaking even. The second worse thing that happened in 2001 after, of course, 9/11 happened, in February when the Congressional Budget Office said that their forecast would be a \$5 trillion surplus over the next 10 years. People around here became euphoric. We are filthy rich. We can cut taxes. We can do everything, and we are going to be fine. In fact, the first Bush Secretary of the Treasury came before the Ways and Means Committee and said he was concerned that we would pay off the national debt so quickly that we would have to pay a premium to get our paper back.

Well, in June of 2001, we embarked on a new economic game plan for this country. Two and a half months later, 9/11, every assumption that went into the conclusion there would be a \$5 trillion surplus over the next 10 years was no longer valid. But what did Congress do? Kept right on going. By 2003, if you look at the Treasury records, by 2003, income coming into Washington was down to 16.3 percent of gross domestic product, and expenditures were over 20 percent because we had gone to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, among other reasons.

What did we do? We borrowed the gap. We started borrowing in 2002, -3,

-4, -5, a decade-long mismanagement by both parties. And for the people who just last week stripped out to pay for and added another \$70 billion on a motion to recommit and to talk about debt and deficits now, when they ought to be trying to help us, what we're doing, as ALLEN BOYD said earlier, we're putting the pause button on this.

We must have statutory PAYGO that was allowed to lapse in 2002 so that you didn't have to pay for anything. You could just blithely pass tax cuts, increase spending and borrow the difference, because do you know something? The people we're borrowing it from aren't here. They don't have a vote.

I remember one time he said, will you vote for a supermajority to raise taxes? I said, no. There's plenty of pressure in the system not to raise taxes. I will vote not to borrow money because there's nobody here protesting what we're doing to the children of this country and the children yet to be born here.

And so, Madam Speaker, it's the responsible thing to do today. But I tell you, this is very short term, like 60 days. When we come back, we've got to insist on a commission or on a statutory PAYGO, on something to break this business-as-usual gridlock that has been going on here this entire decade.

And I defy anybody to argue honestly that it is not a decade-old problem. The last time we broke even, basically, was the fiscal year 2001. And so we have to do this; but when we get back here, when the final chapter is written of this book, I hope we have the ability to come together, and we need the help, we need the help of the Republicans to help us put in statutory PAYGO and the commission, some of these things that will do it.

The problem is not what we're doing. We have a structural deficit. Income right now is about 17½ percent of gross domestic product. Expenditures are over 20.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. I yield the gentleman 2 additional minutes.

Mr. TANNER. It's a structural deficit. When one considers that Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, interest on the debt and the national defense account for 85 cents out of every dollar, you can't cut enough out of the 15 percent to take care of this problem. It's not what we're doing. It's not what we're spending. It's what we're not doing, and that is we are not addressing the structural deficit.

And the only way we are going to get at that is through either statutory PAYGO or an entitlement commission, and hopefully both. It's not what we're doing, it's what we're not doing, and it is a decade-old problem that is getting worse every year. And until this Congress can come together, Democrats and Republicans, what we have around here is too many Republican Ameri-

cans or too many Democratic Americans instead of American Democrats and American Republicans.

I'm telling you, the time is now for American Democrats and American Republicans to get together over the next 60 days and figure out what we're going to do, because we are on an unsustainable financial course.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas, a colleague of mine on Ways and Means, Mr. BRADY.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear our Democrat friend's newfound interest in paying for the war. That hasn't always been the case. Here is what the current majority leader said on this House floor in 2004 when the debt limit was proposed to be raised and we were at war. What now-majority leader Mr. HOYER said: raising the debt limit is immoral. Its disastrous consequence has threatened to cripple our future prosperity and haunt future generations. He said this policy of borrow and spend is not only irresponsible, it is immoral, and it must stop. We are literally mortgaging our future.

These are their words, not ours.

The truth of the matter is, what we are voting on today is a down payment, a two-step, \$2 trillion increase in our debt, two-step, \$2 trillion increase in our debt. And what it means for American families is that the day NANCY PELOSI took the gavel to become Speaker of this House, every man, woman and child in America owed \$29,000 in debt. Today, as a result of this vote and next year's debt limit, every person in America will owe \$45,000 in public debt.

□ 1445

Three years, we've increased to \$45,000 in public debt. It is responsible to pay our bills; it's irresponsible to keep going into debt and asking for more credit while we do it. It's time to stop spending.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank my friend for yielding.

A tired old tradition is being carried out on the House floor today. When it comes time to extend the national debt ceiling, the Members in the minority get up and express outrage, and enough Members in the majority get up and show responsibility and vote to do what needs to be done to pay the Nation's bills.

Madam Speaker, I know a lot of people watching this are scratching their heads and saying, how did we get to such a terrible predicament? Whose fault is it? And I think they're tired of hearing whose fault it is because, frankly, when the other side is in the majority, we say it's their fault; when

they're in the minority, they say it's our fault.

I think a history lesson is in order. In 2001, as Mr. TANNER said, we were looking at a projected \$5 trillion surplus over the decade that we're now closing out. We're going to take in \$5 trillion more than we spent. There were three things that happened in that decade that injured that prospect. The first was horrific, unavoidable, and the fault of no one in this room; it was the terrorist attack on the country on September 11, 2001, which had and still has negative economic consequences as well as security consequences for the country.

The second thing that happened, in my view, is that two disastrous choices were made. The first was to launch two wars by borrowing the money to pay for those wars in Iraq and in Afghanistan. We certainly can disagree—and we have around here a lot—as to whether or not those wars were or were not in the national interest, but I think we should have understood that it was absolutely not in the national interest to defy historic tradition and finance those wars by borrowing money, unlike more responsible predecessors of ours had done in other times.

The second disastrous decision was a tax cut, a huge majority of which benefited the wealthiest 5 or 10 percent of people in this country. That created a mountain of debt that shifted us from a projected \$5 trillion surplus to a projected deficit instead.

Then followed the financial meltdown of the fall of 2008. The Treasury Secretary told us in no uncertain terms that he felt that we were perhaps a few days away from the collapse of the global economy. So to this floor came a \$700 billion bailout bill for the banking industry, and a lot of Members on both sides voted for it. I think it was the right vote because I do think it staved off that calamity from happening, and that added to the national debt. And yes, there were decisions made since the new administration came in to do the stimulus bill in a way that was not paid for.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman from New Jersey 1 additional minute.

Mr. ANDREWS. And I know there is disagreement over whether that was the right thing to do. I think it was absolutely the right thing to do because it stimulated between 600,000 and 1.6 million jobs thus far being saved or created.

Let me say this to you: irrespective of how you recount the history as to how we got here, here we are. And to deal with this problem it seems to me there are three inescapable things we have to do. The first is to get entitlement spending under control. Frankly, our side believes the health care reform bill does exactly that, and the Congressional Budget Office would concur—nearly \$500 billion in entitlement

reductions over a 10-year period. Second, you have to get revenue back on track. Our budget calls for a repeal of the tax reductions for those that are in the top 5 percent or so of the country. I think that is the responsible thing to do. No one on the other side voted for that. And finally, we have to stop spending \$300 or \$400 billion a year to buy oil from other parts of the world. We had legislation here that would put us on that path and build American jobs. Almost no one—single digits—on the other side voted for that.

So this is the day when the minority expresses outrage. There ought to be some other days when the minority expresses some ideas, some plans on how to fix the problem.

Vote "yes."

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT).

(Mr. BARTLETT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT. Madam Speaker, during the Clinton administration, Washington was telling America that we had a budget surplus and we were paying down the debt. Now, while we were telling America that, we had the embarrassing necessity of raising the debt limit ceiling. Why would you have to raise the debt limit ceiling if you're paying down the debt? Surprise, surprise; Washington was not being truthful.

What we were doing was taking money from lockboxes, surplus trust fund moneys, Social Security and Medicare, and paying down the public debt—one more dollar of debt in the trust funds, one less dollar of debt in the public debt. That did nothing to reduce the national debt. And we had other trust fund surpluses for which there was no lockbox. We happily took and spent that money. If we kept our books on the accrual method, there never was a moment in time when we, in fact, reduced the national debt.

Now, talking about accounting methods, our government keeps Enron kind of books. If we kept our books the way we force all but the smallest businesses to keep their books, using the accrual method, we would be showing about \$60 trillion in debt. That's \$200,000 in debt for every man, woman, and child. Clearly, clearly unmanageable.

We should be ashamed that we're here today talking about raising the debt limit ceiling once again. We should be here debating how we're going to balance the budget and then pay down the debt, because I have 10 kids, 17 grandkids, and two great-grandkids, and we have already mortgaged their future. We don't need to do anymore.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Let me first thank Chairman NEAL for the great job that he has done over the years in terms of presenting legislation that is so sorely needed in this House. And let me speculate in terms of how far is it going to go that we are going to have this partisanship in the House of Representatives.

You know, we have a saying that once we're overseas, we leave the Democratic label and the Republican label behind us. But believe me, the flag and the credibility of the United States' credit is on the line. And whether it's the Chinese, the Japanese, or the European Union, it seems to me that the pride that we once had in terms of being the leader of the world, not only in fiscal policy, but in foreign policy, is on the line.

No one out there in our communities is going to look at this as a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. They're going to look at it as an American issue. And they're going to look at the Congress. Why? Because we have the full faith and credit of the United States of America in our hand. People have political problems with raising the debt limit, but our country has fiscal problems. And Treasury has assured us, as he has the minority, that they don't have these fiscal gimmicks in order to play around with it.

I know a lot of people know it's going to pass, and so, therefore, they're not going to vote for it. But somebody—maybe our kids and grandkids—is going to ask, Did the United States of America ever forfeit and didn't pay its debts? And some historian teacher will say, yes, they did. And they will want to know what Congress did it, and who did it; they're not going to ask whether you're a Democrat or Republican.

So we've got plenty of time to fight—we have at least a year. But, please, when the credibility of the United States of America is on the line, don't ask which side you're on; be with your country.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4314, which, according to the majority, "permits continued funding for government operations." That sure sounds a lot better than H.R. 4314, a bill to borrow another \$300 billion from China. Or we could also entitle it, H.R. 4314, a license to keep spending like a teenager with a credit card.

Madam Speaker, the United States is already paying \$250 billion per year in interest payments alone on the debt. We are paying more for that interest by borrowing more. That just doesn't make sense.

The argument that we have already spent the money, and when the bill comes in the mail we have to pay it, is misleading. Every American with a maxed out credit card would love to be

able to pay his bills by simply raising his limit. That is what we're doing here today, ladies and gentlemen. That includes the 15 million unemployed Americans who are still wondering when the so-called stimulus is going to create or save their jobs.

I urge my colleagues to vote against more borrowing and to certainly vote against this bill. America does not want more debt.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, might I inquire as to how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts controls 9 minutes; the gentleman from Nevada controls 16 minutes.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, never in history have so few acted so fast to indebted so many. Since the Democrats have taken control of Congress, this is the fifth time that they have come here to raise the debt ceiling—today, \$290 billion more.

Under their watch, the national debt has increased \$3.4 trillion, or almost \$30,000 for every household in America. Under their fiscal policies, we now have a \$1.4 trillion deficit, our Nation's first. They passed a budget that will triple the national debt in just 10 years, and they are causing us to borrow 40 cents on the dollar from the Chinese and send the bill to our children and grandchildren.

Now, when Republicans controlled this body and the deficit was \$300 billion and falling, the now-majority leader said, "That's fiscal child abuse," and the now-Speaker called it "immoral." And now under their watch it's five times greater, and all we hear is a chorus of "que sera, sera."

It's Christmastime, and the Democrats give us \$290 billion more of debt. Merry Christmas.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from New York, a voice of good sense on the issues of debt, Mr. CROWLEY.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank my good friend from Massachusetts for yielding me the time.

The Republicans keep claiming that Federal spending and deficits are growing under the Democrats, but let's look at the facts.

Republican Conference Chairman MIKE PENCE said just a few minutes ago that they, the Republicans, doubled the national debt in 8 years to almost \$12 trillion. And you know what? MIKE is right. About an hour or so ago Republican JEFF FLAKE said spending was out of control when Republicans were in charge of Congress and the White House. And you know what? He was right as well. And the funny thing, when President George Bush was voted into office he inherited a multi-trillion dollar surplus of funds from President

Clinton and the Democrats. So the party who borrowed and spent and squandered surpluses is now standing in the way of moving forward in the right path.

The very Republicans who refused to run the country like our constituents have to run their households—buying only what they can afford—are opposed to legislation that will ensure all new spending and tax cuts are paid for. This would prevent us from adding to the deficit, yet Republicans are opposed, arguing they should be allowed to tax and borrow from the Chinese at will, but only for their priorities.

So the hangover from President Bush and Republican control of Congress still lingers. It was Republicans who pushed a \$700 billion bailout package for the banks, a package that Democrats and President Obama are demanding be paid back—and with interest—from those very same banks. Then we had tax cuts for the wealthiest in America, with no assistance to the middle class, and then a refusal to fund the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Democrats are correcting these disastrous decisions by our Republican colleagues.

The only thing more galling than the inaccuracy and denial of the Republicans of their own records and votes is their hypocrisy on this issue of their own out-of-control spending and legacy of deficits.

□ 1500

Mr. HELLER. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE).

Mr. SCALISE. I want to thank the gentleman from Nevada for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this is my congressional voting card. Unfortunately, some of the liberals running this Congress think that this is a credit card that has an unlimited balance. Today, they stand before us, trying to add another \$290 billion of limit onto their credit cards because they have maxed out the previous at \$12 trillion. The American people are saying enough is enough. They want us to cap the debt, and we need to.

We filed legislation that has over 70 cosponsors that would do just that—that would cap the debt and say now let's start paying it down. The first rule of hole says, when you find yourself in a hole, the first thing you do is stop digging. The American people are saying stop the massive spending. Stop adding to our debt. Stop throwing more and more spending and debt onto the backs of our children and our grandchildren. Let's rein in fiscal irresponsibility.

That's why we are opposing this legislation. We proposed responsible alternatives like the CAP the DEBT Act. Of course, they don't want to bring it up because all they want to do is walk around here, thinking that they're Santa Claus at Christmastime, borrowing more money and spending more money that we don't have.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I will remind the gentleman it wasn't a liberal sitting in the White House who decided to invade Iraq for which the costs have now come due.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to a friend of mine, a colleague on the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM).

Mr. ROSKAM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, it is the holiday season, and the majority is saying, Cheers.

Here we are, and it's really been an unbelievable party, hasn't it? I mean here we are, and you have all of these folks who have come together, doubling the national debt, as was described, over a 5-year period. The majority will now triple the national debt, and it is as if all they can do is keep serving. No discipline. Hey, cheers. Here you go. Enjoy. Well, here is what happens at the end of that binge. Here is what happens at the end of that kegger:

Ultimately, the old man drives up into the driveway and looks around, and the party is going to be over. Who is going to be there to clean it up? Our children and our grandchildren, Madam Speaker. They are the ones who will be there, taking care of this mess over a long period of time.

So we ought not be continuing serving a government that has been overserved time and time and time again. Instead, what we ought to do is avoid the generational theft, do what is right by our children and grandchildren and not increase this debt.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. I yield myself 1 minute.

Madam Speaker, this is not a cheery time for the American people. This is a very difficult time. A reminder: The legislation in front of us now is to pay for the war in Iraq, to pay for the war in Afghanistan, to pay for our veterans' hospitals, and to pay for next month's Social Security recipients to receive their checks on time.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, we were asked: How can we vote to have troops go to Iraq and not be willing to pay for them?

Well, the problem is we keep having things added to the bills that will pay for these things. We keep adding things like Gitmo language, like we're going to move the people from Gitmo and spend tens or hundreds of millions of dollars unnecessarily just to make some political point.

We hear people across the aisle say, Gee. You know, we can't afford to lose respect around the world if we forfeit on the debt. Don't forfeit on the debt. You don't gain respect when you keep calling the credit card company and saying, I know I'm not making any

payments, but if you'll just keep increasing my debt limit, I know you'll have more respect for me. No, that's not how it works.

We are told across the aisle we have no solutions. Go look at the bills that are waiting to come to the floor. I've got a zero baseline budget that doesn't allow the automatic increases. That would make a huge contribution, and we could bring down the debt. Yet there are no indications, nothing to indicate that the spending is going to be controlled. It is outrageous what we are doing to future generations. Any parent who would go in and tell the bank, Keep loaning to me, and I promise my kids will repay it, would be considered an unfit parent.

Yes, the people in America were promised change. What they have gotten is exponentially more spending than Republicans had done before. It's time for a change. Stop spending. Vote this down.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. I yield myself 30 seconds.

Madam Speaker, the war in Iraq is going to cost more than \$1 trillion. The VA hospital commitment that we are going to make for the next 30 years to our well-deserving veterans is going to cost an additional \$1 trillion. That is the issue that is before us this afternoon.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I was just thinking about the people back home who may be watching this. They hear the Democrats blaming the Republicans for all of these things that are costing so much money, and that's the reason we have to raise the national debt. You know, I looked at a \$1.4 trillion deficit last year, and we're already ahead of that this year. We are not in charge. You folks are.

The health care bill that you're trying to ram through is going to cost \$1 trillion to \$3 trillion, and the stimulus bill is going to cost over \$1 trillion when you add interest.

The bottom line is we have got to stop spending. We are spending too much money. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, the American people back home are saying, Get your house in order. Quit spending so much money. Live within your means like we have to.

We have 10 percent unemployment right now, and the people back home don't want us wasting money that will end up resulting in our having to raise taxes, which we don't want to do and which I won't vote for, and end up resulting in inflation, which is going to be hung on our kids in the future. So we have to quit spending instead of just raising the debt.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, let me say to my colleague from Massachusetts that he and I came in together. Back in 1988, we were both elected, and he and I served in the same class together. As I recollect, he was mayor of Springfield.

You balanced your budget as mayor. You had to balance your budget. Now, we've been up here trying to balance the budget, you and I, for almost 21 years. It has not been successful. I supported a balanced budget—both a constitutional amendment as well as a legislative balanced budget. I don't believe you or your colleagues did. I say this because, frankly, we have been talking about deficit as long as you and I have been in Congress. We can blame Republicans. We can blame Democrats, but let's just look at the record for a second.

When you and I came in under Bush I, do you remember those deficits? They talked about \$250 billion, and we just lamented about it and lamented about it, and we complained about it. Well, you know, that's what happened. It has exploded. So now we're looking at deficits that are a lot larger, as my colleague mentioned, \$1.4 trillion.

When you look at Bush II, George W. Bush, he had deficits of \$600 billion. I remember the folks on that side were complaining about how terrible that was at \$600 billion.

Well, the problem is now we're talking almost two, three times that amount of money. Actually, when you go back and look at when Ronald Reagan was President, critics called great criticism to him. They said the deficit was out of control in this country. The deficits were about \$250 billion. So the point I am trying to make is that the deficit under Republican Presidents and even under Republican control of the House and the Senate and the White House was small, very small, to what we have today.

You can say that there is good reason for this vote today because you support our troops and our wars, and you also support veterans. I think that's true. Yet there has been no effort by your side to hold the appropriations bill.

I have been on the House floor, and I say to my colleague, your appropriations bills are 13 percent larger than last year's. Almost every one of them was 13, 18—One was almost 20 percent. How in the world can you justify appropriations bills that are so large?

So in the end, Democrats are not trying to reduce costs nor balance the budget. In fact, they are recklessly encouraging more government spending. That is why they need to increase the debt ceiling.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. STEARNS is, indeed, my friend, and we are classmates.

Madam Speaker, he conveniently left out those 4 years when Bill Clinton left a balanced budget to America, when the deficits were eliminated and when the debt was coming down. That's the key consideration here as we begin this debate. Indeed, this is about paying for our veterans' hospitals, paying for the war in Iraq, paying for the war in Afghanistan, and making sure that those Social Security checks get out on January 1.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Nevada controls 8½ minutes, and the gentleman from Massachusetts controls 5¾ minutes.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the Republican policy Chair, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER).

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, a quick point that was raised by our esteemed colleague from Massachusetts about how President Clinton left 4 years of balanced budgets: It was with the assistance of a Republican majority in the Congress, which is an exceptional precedent, you'll remember, as we head to the polls in 2010.

As we address this issue of raising the debt ceiling, let us be charitable in this, the giving season. Let us recall that, as the Democratic Party's argument today is "the same but more," let us look at what they have tried to give the American people over the course of the past year for stocking stuffers.

First, Americans got higher unemployment, higher spending, higher deficits, and higher taxes.

Secondly, senior citizens got a \$500 billion cut in Medicare. Terrorists got new rights, new trials, and new cells on American soil, and Federal Government bureaucrats got raises.

I think that we should question our priorities and the direction in which we are taking ourselves before we decide to spend more money on this. It strikes me that it is very justifiable for the American people to watch this debate, to watch the debt ceiling be raised, and to come to the distinct conclusion that the Democratic majority in Congress has proven itself too costly and too crazy too quickly.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, I am a freshman in this body. I didn't help create this mess, but I am here to help clean it up. The fact of the matter is we have to spend less than we are spending now. We have to be responsible stewards of the American people's money.

We are \$12 trillion in debt. Remember, if you spend \$1 million a day every

day, it would take you nearly 3,000 years just to get to \$1 trillion, and we are \$12 trillion in debt. When is this body going to say no?

This body is not making difficult decisions. I am sorry, but the Democrats in control have refused to find a solution to things that don't cost literally hundreds of billions of dollars every time we turn around. We can't be all things to all people. We have to learn to say "no." At what point will there actually be a cap? At what point will there actually be a ceiling? We see no hope on the horizon for that.

We have got to be responsible stewards of the American people's money. We cannot be all things to all people. We are spending nearly \$600 million a day just in interest on our debt.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4314.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

CALL OF THE HOUSE

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 7 of rule XX, I move a call of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The previous question being ordered, the Chair notes the absence of a quorum in accord with clause 7(c) of rule XX and chooses to entertain a motion for a call of the House pursuant to clause 7(b) of rule XX.

A call of the House was ordered.

The call was taken by electronic device, and the following Members responded to their names:

[Roll No. 987]

Abercrombie	Bonner	Castle
Ackerman	Bono Mack	Castor (FL)
Aderholt	Boozman	Chaffetz
Adler (NJ)	Boren	Chandler
Akin	Boswell	Childers
Alexander	Boucher	Chu
Altire	Boustany	Clarke
Andrews	Boyd	Cleaver
Arcuri	Brady (PA)	Clyburn
Austria	Brady (TX)	Coble
Baca	Braley (IA)	Coffman (CO)
Bachmann	Bright	Cohen
Bachus	Broun (GA)	Cole
Baird	Brown (SC)	Conaway
Baldwin	Brown-Waite,	Connolly (VA)
Barrett (SC)	Ginny	Conyers
Barrow	Buchanan	Cooper
Bartlett	Burgess	Costello
Barton (TX)	Burton (IN)	Courtney
Bean	Butterfield	Crenshaw
Becerra	Buyer	Crowley
Berkley	Calvert	Cuellar
Berman	Camp	Culberson
Berry	Campbell	Cummings
Biggert	Cantor	Dahlkemper
Bilbray	Cao	Davis (AL)
Bilirakis	Capito	Davis (CA)
Bishop (GA)	Capps	Davis (IL)
Bishop (NY)	Capuano	Davis (KY)
Bishop (UT)	Cardoza	Davis (TN)
Blackburn	Carnahan	Deal (GA)
Blumenauer	Carney	DeFazio
Blunt	Carson (IN)	DeGette
Bocchieri	Carter	Delahunt
Boehner	Cassidy	DeLauro